

The voters of Washington state have enacted Initiative 594, concerning background checks on firearm sales and transfers. The initiative became effective on Dec. 4, 2014. The Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), in close consultation with the Attorney General's Office, has determined that I-594 will not significantly affect the hunter education program, program instructors or prospective students.

I-594 requires that all firearms sales or transfers in Washington be subject to background checks and be made through licensed dealers.

The initiative, however, exempts all law enforcement agencies, including WDFW and its employees, from the background check/transfer requirement.

Therefore, hunter education instructors, when acting as WDFW volunteers, are exempt from the I-594 background check/transfer requirements.

Background check/transfer requirements of I-594 are not applicable to the transfers of firearms between hunter education instructors, and between instructors and students.

The requirements also do not apply to transfers of firearms between hunter education instructors and sports clubs, gun clubs, and other non-governmental organizations, when transfers are conducted for the purposes of administering hunter education.

Student-to-student transfers during hunter education classes could be exempt under certain circumstances. If such transfers are not exempt, WDFW will provide additional information about those transfers and will make the necessary changes to classroom procedures to avoid conflicts with I-594.

WDFW will modify the hunter education instructor policy manual to clarify any required adjustments.

For more information, please contact WDFW's hunter education program at (360) 902-8111.

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